

ELECTIVE (SSC5b) REPORT (1200 words)

A report that addresses the above four objectives should be written below. Your Elective supervisor will assess this.

Reflecting on my recent medical elective in Malaysia, this experience has been a profound journey of professional learning intertwined with significant personal growth. Being attached to the anesthetic department, I was privileged to observe a wide range of medical procedures, each bringing its own set of learnings and challenges.

I observed a laparoscopic bypass surgery for the removal of ovarian cysts. The intricacies of the intubation process were particularly fascinating, encompassing the use of varied medications such as anti-emetics, anti-muscarinic analgesics, and induction agents used in anesthesia. The technique for successful intubation and the subsequent extubation process was insightful. Particularly, the practice of using auscultation to confirm successful intubation—a technique less commonly observed in the UK—piqued my interest. This observation has sparked a keen interest in exploring diverse anesthesia protocols and their implications on patient safety and outcomes, urging me to delve deeper into these practices to enrich my understanding and application in future medical practice.

Moreover, my engagement with the local medical students during various educational activities illuminated stark differences in educational structures. In Malaysia, the role of student representatives is markedly proactive, fostering a community-oriented approach that ensures efficient communication and focused learning environments. This is evident in the use of shared timetables and group chats that disseminate day-to-day changes and inquiries. The student cohort, being much smaller, and all students being attached to one hospital where consultants are known to students and vice versa, creates a structured and responsive environment. This contrasts sharply with the more passive system I am accustomed to in London. Recognizing the value in such an organized system, I see immense potential in adopting similar practices to enhance educational experiences back home.

During my elective, I also participated in ICU ward rounds, attended pain clinics, and observed surgeries such as elective C-sections. Participating in these activities broadened my understanding of Malaysia's healthcare landscape significantly. During ICU ward rounds, I observed the treatment of conditions familiar to me, such as diabetic ketoacidosis and myasthenia gravis crises, but was particularly struck by the prevalence of dengue fever—a condition rarely seen in the UK, except in patients who have recently travelled to endemic regions. The local students' explanations that cases of dengue often present through emergency departments and may escalate to ICU care provided a stark reminder of the global health disparities that exist. Learning about the typical presentation and complications of dengue fever has significantly broadened my clinical knowledge and understanding of these disparities.

Shadowing doctors and their interactions with students also highlighted distinct educational expectations. Unlike in the UK, where detailed knowledge of biochemistry and histopathology is not emphasized in later clinical years, Malaysian students are expected to retain and apply this knowledge throughout their medical education. This difference was initially surprising but has given me a deeper appreciation for the diverse academic foundations in medical training worldwide.

Attending an elective C-section provided insight into Malaysia's unique blend of public and private healthcare systems—a structure uncommon in the UK. Learning about the different maternity packages available in both sectors was particularly intriguing. For instance, in government hospitals, fathers are not allowed in the operating theatre, unlike in private hospitals. This experience has sparked my interest in how such differences impact patient choices and experiences. Additionally, this experience allowed me to revisit and appreciate the intricate and complex anesthetic management involved in C-sections. Here, I was able to observe local anesthetic techniques and the subsequent monitoring required for effective pain

management.

Through study sessions and shadowing doctors, I also revisited and reinforced my medical knowledge through practical application. I revisited my knowledge of non-invasive ventilation, learning about the HACOR score, which predicts the likelihood of failure on non-invasive ventilation. Additionally, the transport of critically ill patients was covered in-depth, a topic often reserved for on-the-job training in the UK. These sessions were invaluable in enhancing my practical skills and theoretical understanding.

From a personal perspective, having never lived abroad before, I faced the challenges of budgeting, traveling, and living with friends, all of which taught me much about myself. These experiences have fostered a newfound flexibility and resilience, essential traits in the often unpredictable realm of medicine. I have become more adaptable, a skill that is invaluable in my professional life.

Culturally, immersing myself in the rich tapestry of Malaysian life, exploring local cuisine, and understanding the coexistence of various ethnicities and religions has been profoundly enlightening. The openness and warmth of the locals, contrasting with the more reserved nature often found in London, have enriched this experience, making it not only educational but also personally fulfilling. One of the highlights of my time here was forming friendships with Malaysian students. Sharing in their daily lives and exploring local cuisine has greatly enriched my elective experience. These friendships are not only enjoyable but are also fulfilling one of my key objectives for studying abroad: building lasting connections.

As I move forward, the insights gained during this elective are shaping my professional perspectives and crafting a more rounded personal identity. The experiences here are proving to be invaluable, fostering a holistic view of medicine practiced within a global context. I am eager to carry these learnings forward into my future medical career, confident that the skills and knowledge acquired will serve me well in diverse medical environments.